

United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/934
18 July 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Secretary-General, in Guadalajara for Iberoamerican Summit, holds talks with Heads of State including President Fidel Castro of Cuba, and President Alfredo Cristiani of El Salvador.
- ◆ United Nations Special Commission says it would be "inappropriate" to take the Government of Iraq's statements on nuclear programme at "face value".
- ◆ Members of Economic and Social Council discuss revitalization of global economy and the Council itself, and the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.
- ◆ Following Group of Seven Summit agreement, World Bank President Barber B. Conable welcomes opportunity to assist Soviet Union in economic development and structural reform.
- ◆ The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announces provision of assistance and protection to some 200,000 displaced persons in Ethiopia.

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has arrived in Guadalajara, Mexico, to participate as an observer in the first Iberoamerican Summit of Heads of State and Government, which was scheduled to open officially this afternoon.

According to a spokesman, the Secretary-General held bilateral talks yesterday, 17 July, with President Fidel Castro of Cuba, with whom he discussed the current world situation, Cuba's role in the Security Council and the situation in Latin America. The Secretary-General also met with President Carlos Salinas of Mexico and Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez of Spain, President Cesar Gaviria of Columbia and President Alberto Fujimori of Peru.

This morning, the Secretary-General met with President Alfredo Cristiani of El Salvador, with whom he discussed the ongoing peace talks between the

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Government and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), as well as the upcoming United Nations Verification Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).

In addition to the 21 Heads of State and Government from Latin America, Spain and Portugal, also attending the meeting are: Federico Mayor, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Gert Rosenthal, Executive Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Joao Baena Soares, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS); and Enrique Iglesias, President of the Inter-American Development Bank.

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The Special Commission said today that the question of how much highly enriched uranium may have been accumulated by Iraq must remain open.

In a press release issued at Headquarters today, the Commission said reports from the inspection teams make it clear "that there is much work to be done before any conclusions can be reached about whether or not more equipment or material remains to be turned over to the IAEA/Special Commission".

The Commission said new information offered by the Iraqi Government was only made available after the inspection team had discovered activities aimed at hiding the equipment and keeping the uranium enrichment programme secret. The Commission said it would thus be "inappropriate to take the Government of Iraq's statements at face value".

The Special Commission said only further inspections could establish the extent of the enrichment activities, and whether or not Iraq has been active in other technologies in this field as well.

The Commission said "there is nothing offered by Iraq to date to give confidence in a conclusion that significant quantities of highly-enriched uranium have not been produced".

A United Nations spokesman said today that under resolution 687 (1991), IAEA inspections of Iraqi nuclear sites were continuing. He said a new inspection team would travel to Iraq next week to replace the current team which leaves Iraq this Saturday.

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In Geneva, members of the Economic and Social Council are discussing the revitalization of the global economy and the Council itself and the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

During the debate, Edward Marks, the representative of the United States, said the revitalization of the Council was an old dream and that little had been achieved. The Council, he said, should find a way to perform needed

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tasks in its role as a principal organ of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. The Council needed to become more effective by enhancing both the substance and follow-through of the General Assembly.

On the subject of minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, the Council heard from the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Margaret J. Anstee, who said that the accident at the nuclear power plant had erroneously been filed away in the minds of many as no longer of consequence. Ms. Anstee, who is also the Coordinator for international assistance efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, pointed out that the explosion of Unit 4 of the Chernobyl nuclear plant on 26 April 1986 "involved the largest short-term release from a single source of radioactive materials to the atmosphere ever recorded".

She said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) estimated that more than 1 million people still lived in contaminated regions, including the southwestern part of the largest Soviet republic, the Russian Federation. A representative of the Ukraine called victims of the disaster in his country "ecological refugees" and said there were some 100,000 such persons waiting to be resettled.

In his address to the Council, Abel Gonzalez of IAEA explained that some 50 technical missions had studied the health situation in the affected areas and had concluded that radiation doses incurred by the population, as well as those expected to be delivered in the future, were lower than originally estimated. He said the reports had refuted the common media image of dramatic radiation effects.

However, some delegates expressed dissatisfaction with the results of the report, saying the full effect on human health would not be known for years to come.

The President of the World Bank, Barber B. Conable, has welcomed the opportunity to apply the extensive experience of his bank in economic development and structural reform to the challenges facing the Soviet Union.

In a statement issued yesterday, 17 July, following the agreement reached in London by the Group of Seven industrialized nations, Mr. Conable said that, having participated in the joint study of the Soviet economy which was carried out last fall, the World Bank's staff was "already familiar with many of the complex and difficult issues" that must be addressed.

He said discussions with member nations made him confident that they would support the establishment of a relationship with the Soviet Union, and added that the assistance his agency could provide would prove beneficial to the international community as a whole.

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The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), has informed the United Nations that it is providing assistance and protection to some 200,000 displaced persons in Ethiopia, mostly demobilized soldiers of the former Government's army, who were obliged to leave Eritrea at the end of hostilities.

In a press release issued at United Nations Headquarters today, ICRC said it was providing humanitarian assistance to more than 50,000 people in some of the ICRC camps, and thousands more were arriving every day. The ICRC had already taken more than 20,000 displaced persons back to their home areas. At present, some 40 ICRC delegates and more than 840 Ethiopian Red Cross staff were involved in the operation.

According to ICRC, additional aid is essential to avert a rapid deterioration in the health situation.

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